



Formal Communication

TO: WIB Directors
Program Directors

FROM: William R. Miller, Director
Career Services

DATE: August 12, 2006

**Workforce Investment Act – Technical Assistance Bulletin
WIA – TAB 2005-003**

High School Diplomas for Individuals with Disabilities

Question: How may an individual with a disability earn a high school diploma?

Response:

Attached is an information sheet from the Indiana Department of Education (DOE) concerning how an individual with disabilities may earn a high school diploma. There are three ways. These are:

1. Pass the Graduation Qualifying Examination (GQE);
OR
2. Meet the Core 40 graduation requirement;
OR
3. (if the student did not pass the GQE, but met all other graduation requirements) Demonstrate mastery of 9th grade academic standards through the “waiver” or “alternate documentation” process (subsection “d” of IC 20-10.1-1-16-13 applies to students without disabilities, and subsection “e” of 20-10.1-16-13 applies to students with disabilities).

AND

Must meet all other state and local graduation requirements as well (applies to 1, 2, and 3 above).

The information sheet includes the criteria for earning a diploma through the waiver process that applies to students with disabilities who have met all graduation requirements except passing one or both parts of the GQE (item 3 above). A diploma earned in this way is an official high school diploma. Please read the fact sheet carefully for complete information.

Individuals with disabilities who earn a high school diploma through the State of Indiana are included in the WIA performance standards for the “Adult Employment and Credential Rate” and the “Older Youth Credential Rate.” Individuals with disabilities who earn a high school diploma through the State of Indiana are also included in the youth common measure “Attainment of a Degree or Certificate.”

Students with disabilities who are not eligible to earn a diploma will generally be eligible to receive a Certificate of Completion. The certificate is not an academic credential as is a diploma. As such, the certificate does not meet the credential definition for the WIA performance standards and the certificate definition for the youth common measure.

Questions concerning the attainment of a high school diploma for individuals with disabilities may be addressed to Tony Collier, Director, Center of Excellence, at 317/232-7595, or by email at tcollier@dwd.in.gov.

WIA-TAB No	Subject Matter
2005-001	Incentive Payments to WIA Participants
2005-002	Incumbent Worker Councils
2005-003	High School Diplomas for Individuals with Disabilities
2003-000	Workforce Investment Act Technical Bulletin
2003-001	WIA Citizenship and Registration for Selective Services
2003-002	Intensive and Training Services
2003-003	Service Tiers & Partner Services
2003-004	Temporary Employee Eligibility
2003-005	Driver's License as a Credential
2003-006	CPR or First Aid as a Credential
2003-007	Basic Skills Deficiency
2004-001	Work Keys Certificates

EARNING AN INDIANA HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA: THREE WAYS TO BECOME ELIGIBLE

This article discusses the three (3) ways an Indiana student may earn an Indiana high school diploma. Hoosier students who plan to earn a diploma should be aware of the three (3) ways to earn a diploma. These are:

1. Pass the Graduation Qualifying Examination (GQE);
OR
2. Meet the Core 40 graduation requirement:
OR
3. (if the student did not pass the GQE, but met all other graduation requirements) Demonstrate mastery of 9th grade academic standards through the “waiver” or “alternate documentation” process (subsection “d” of IC 20-10.1-16-13 applies to students without disabilities, and subsection “e” of 20-10.1-16-13 applies to students with disabilities).

AND

Must meet all other state and local graduation requirements as well (applies to 1, 2, and 3 above).

All students are expected to participate in statewide or district wide testing. High school students with disabilities who expect to earn a diploma must take the 10th grade ISTEP+ GQE as often as required by their IEP, but at least one time. Hopefully the student will pass both (Math and Reading/Language Arts) parts of the GQE and not have to take the test again. If they do not pass both parts, students have up to four (4) additional opportunities (2 as a junior and 2 as a senior) to take the part(s) of the GQE they did not pass. A student with a disability shall retake the graduation examination in each subject area in which the student did not achieve a passing score as often as required by the student’s individualized education program.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

There are differences between **accommodations** and **modifications**. **Many testing accommodations are allowed** during the ISTEP+ tests and for the GQE, but **modifications are not allowed**. An accommodation does not change what is being taught or tested. An accommodation “levels the playing field” for students with disabilities. For example, a Braille version of the test is an accommodation for a student with a visual impairment. A Braille version of the test does not change what is being tested, it merely accommodates the student. Additional test time, the use of a scribe or an interpreter, using a word processor (with the grammar-check and spell-check features turned off) are other examples of accommodations which are allowed for ISTEP+ and GQE purposes. Accommodations used for ISTEP+ or GQE purposes should: 1) be accommodations the student uses for instruction and testing during the school year; 2) be accommodations that are specified for the student in their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section

504 Plan; and 3) comply with **ISTEP+ Program Manual** requirements concerning accommodations. For example, reading comprehension portions of the ISTEP+ or GQE can not be read to the student even if the IEP or 504 Plan lists this as an accommodation.

Modifications actually change what is being taught or tested. **Modifications** are generally **not permitted** if a course is being taken for credit, and **modifications are not allowed** for ISTEP+ or GQE testing. Modifications of test content or of the academic standards being assessed are not allowed in standardized testing situations such as the ISTEP+ and GQE. Students may not be administered shorter versions of the test, offered a reduced number of possible responses, or provided with simplified directions. Under no circumstances may students have portions of the reading comprehension component of the ISTEP+ or GQE read to them.

Additional information on accommodations and modifications is contained in the **ISTEP+ Program Manual**. See especially the **Appendix** for charts listing accommodations.

MORE ON THE THREE WAYS TO EARN AN INDIANA HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

One way to earn an Indiana High School Diploma is to pass the GQE and satisfy other state and local graduation requirements. By passing the English/language arts and mathematics sections, students are able to show that they understand and can use basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. If they do not pass the GQE in the fall of Grade 10, they have four (4) other opportunities to retake the test or a particular section during their Junior and Senior years. The Case Conference Committee determines the number of times a student should re-take the parts of the GQE they did not pass and should include this in the student's IEP.

A **second way** to earn an Indiana High School Diploma is to meet the academic standard by successfully completing all components of the Core 40 curriculum, as stipulated in Indiana Code 20-10.1-16-13, Section (c), and satisfy all other state and local graduation requirements. The Core 40 curriculum has been designed to prepare students for college. A high school counselor or principal can help determine if the student is able to satisfy the graduation requirement through this method.

A **third way** for a student with a disability to earn an Indiana High School Diploma is described in Indiana Code (law) at IC 20-10.1-16-13 at subsection (e), reprinted below (note: subsection (d) of IC 20-10.1-16-13 describes a similar process for students who do not have a disability). This is often referred to as the “waiver” process or the “alternate documentation” process, and applies to students with disabilities who have met all graduation requirements except passing one or both parts of the GQE. A diploma earned in this way is an official high school diploma.

(e) This subsection applies to a student who is a child with a disability (as defined in IC 20-1-6-1). If the student does not achieve a passing score on the graduation examination, the student's case conference committee may determine that the student is eligible to graduate if the case conference committee finds the following:

(1) The student's teacher of record, in consultation with a teacher of the student in each subject area in which the student has not achieved a passing score, makes a written recommendation to the case conference committee. The recommendation must:

(A) be concurred in by the principal of the student's school; and

(B) be supported by documentation that the student has attained the academic standard in the subject area based upon:

(i) tests other than the graduation examination; or

(ii) classroom work.

(2) The student meets all of the following requirements:

(A) Retakes the graduation examination in each subject area in which the student did not achieve a passing score as often as required by the student's individualized education program.

(B) Completes remediation opportunities provided to the student by the student's school to the extent required by the student's individualized education program.

(C) Maintains a school attendance rate of at least ninety-five percent (95%) to the extent required by the student's individualized education program with excused absences not counting against the student's attendance.

(D) Maintains at least a "C" average or the equivalent in the courses comprising the credits specifically required for graduation by rule of the board.

(E) Otherwise satisfies all state and local graduation requirements.

NOTES:

1. The door never closes on your opportunity to earn a high school diploma. If you are no longer in high school and still need to pass one or both sections of the GQE in order to graduate, you can take the test at specific locations throughout the state. (Passing the GQE first became a requirement for graduation beginning with the Class of 2000.) You must have satisfactorily completed all other graduation requirements. Call the ISTEP+ Hotline at 1-888-54-ISTEP (1-888-544-7837) for more information.
2. The "alternate documentation" process for satisfying the GQE requirement, described above, is for students with disabilities. For information concerning the alternate documentation process to be followed by students who do not have a disability, and who did not achieve a passing score on the GQE, but who meet all other state and local requirements for graduation, refer to IC 20-10.1-16-13, Section (d).
3. Legislation referring to ISTEP+ and the GQE can be found in the **ISTEP+ Program Manual**. The manual can be downloaded from the Indiana Department of Education

Website at *www.doe.state.in.us/istep*. The legislation cited in this article is contained in the **ISTEP+ Program Manual**.

4. Students with disabilities who are not eligible to earn a diploma will generally be eligible to receive a Certificate of Completion. The Certificate of Completion is not an academic credential as is a diploma, but students receiving a Certificate of Completion are eligible to participate in any graduation ceremonies the school may sponsor. Students who are on a diploma track but do not meet the requirements to graduate with a diploma may wish to reconvene their case conference committees to revise their IEPs, so that they can receive a Certificate of Completion.
5. Check with your guidance counselor for any changes in graduation requirements.

HS Diploma Spring 05 INDEP